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THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC.

Its Dangers and its Possibilities.

AN ORATION

DELIVERED BY

HENRY GEORGE,

IN THE CALIFORNIA THEATRE, SAN FRANCISCO, ON THE CELEBRATION
OF THE 4TH OF JULY, 1877.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen :

It is under circumstances that inspire gratitude and renew patriotism that we celebrate the completion by the American Republic of the first year of her second century. How much that year has held of the possibilities of dire calamity it may be too soon to speak. But for the deliverance let us give thanks. Through the web woven by passion and prejudice has run the woof of a beneficent purpose. Through clash of plans and conflict of parties; through gateways hung with cloud and by paths we knew not of, have we come to this good estate !

As, when the long struggle was over; the men of the Revolution turned to pour forth their thanks to Him in whose hands are the nations, so let us turn to-day. Last year was the Centennial; but this year, if we read the times aright, marks the era, and with 1877 will the historian, in future ages, close the grand division of our history that records the long, sad strife of which slavery was the cause. Most gracious of our national anniversaries is that we keep. Never before has the great Declaration rung through the land as to-day. For the first time have its words neither fallen on the ears of a slave nor been flung back by a bayonet-guarded State House !

For year after year, while they who won our independence faded away; for year after year, while their sons grew old, and in their turn taught us to light the altar fires of the Republic, at every recurring anniversary of the nation's birth, the unexpressed thought of an inherited curse that was sowing the land with dragon's teeth, checked the pride and gave to the rejoicings of the thoughtful a somber background, and between thunder of gun and voice of trumpet, the black shadow of a great wrong mocked in silence the burning words that protested to the world the inalienable rights of man. To this there came an end. In the deadly close of civil war, when all fierce and wicked passions were loosed, while the earth shook with the tread of fratricidal armies, and the heavens were red with the blaze of burning homes, amid the groans of dying men and the cry of stricken women, the great curse passed away. But still the shadow. Could we boast a Union in which State Governments were maintained by extra-State force, or glory in a republic whose forms were mocked in virtual provinces?

But all this is of the past. The long strife is over. The cancer has been cut out. And may we not also say to-day, that the wound of the knife has healed? To-day we celebrate the nation's birth, more truly one people than for years and years. Again in soul as in form, the many are one. Over palmetto as over pine floats the flag that typifies the glory of our common past, the promise of our common future—the flag that rose above the blood-stained snow of Valley Forge, that crossed with Washington the icy Delaware—the flag that Marion bore, that Paul Jones nailed to the mast, that Lafayette saluted! Over our undivided heritage of a continent it floats to-day, with the free will of a united people—under its folds no slave, and in its blue no star save that of a free and sovereign State. And, as in city and town and hamlet, to-day, has been read once more the declaration of a nation's birth, again, I believe me, in the hearts of their people, has Adams signed with Jefferson and Rutledge with Livingston, pledging to the Republic, one and indivisible, life and fortune and sacred honor!

Beside me on this platform, around me in this audience, sit men who have borne arms against each other in civil strife, again united under the folds of that flag. Men of the South and men of the North, do I not speak what is in your hearts, do I not give voice to your hope and your trust, when I say that the Union is again restored in spirit as in form—not a union of conquerors and conquered, but the union of a people—one in soul as one in blood; one in destiny as one in heritage!

Let our dead strifes bury their dead, while we cherish the feeling that makes us one. Let us spare no myrrh nor frankincense nor costly spices as we feed the sacred fire. It is not a vain thing these flags, these decorations, these miles of marching men. Stronger than armies, more potent than treasure is the sentiment of nationality they typify and inculcate!

Yet to more than the sentiment of nationality is this day sacred. It marks more than the birth of a nation—it marks a step in the progress of the race. More than national independence, more than national union, speaks out in that grand document to which we have just listened; it is the declaration of the fundamental principle of liberty—of a truth that has in it power to renovate the world.

It is meet that on this day the flags of all nations should mingle above our processions and wreath our halls. For this is the festival of her to whom under all skies eyes have turned and hands been lifted—of her who has had in all lands her lovers and her martyrs—of her who shall yet unite the nations and bid the war drums cease! It is the festival of Liberty!

And in keeping this day to Liberty, we honor all her sacred days—those glorious days on which she has stepped forward, those sad days on which she has been stricken down by open foes, or fallen wounded in the house of her friends. Far back stretches the lineage of the Republic at whose birth Liberty was invoked—from every land have been gathered the gleams of light that unite in her beacon fire. It is kindled of the progress of mankind; it witnesses to heaven the aspirations of the ages; it shall light the nations to yet nobler heights!

Let us keep this day as the day sacred to Union and to Liberty should be kept. Let us draw closer the cords of our common brotherhood and renew our fathers' vows. Let it be honored as John Adams predicted it would be honored—with clangor of bells and roar of guns, with music and processions and assemblages of the people, with every mark of respect and rejoicing—that its memories of glory may entwine themselves with the earliest recollections of our children, that even the thoughtless may catch something of its inspiration!

Yet it is not enough that with all the marks of veneration we keep these holidays. It is possible to cherish the form and lose the spirit.

No matter how bright the lights behind, their usefulness is but to illumine the path before. Whatever be the causes of that enormous difference—almost a difference in kind—between the stationary and the progressive races, here is its unflinching indication—the one look to the past, the other to the future. The moment we believe that all wisdom was concentrated in our ancestors, that moment the petrification of China is upon us. For life is growth, and growth is change, and political progress consists in getting rid of institutions we have outgrown. Aristocracy, feudality, monarchy, slavery—all the things against which human progress has been a slow and painful struggle—were, doubtless, in their times relatively if not absolutely beneficial, as have been in later times things we may have to cast away. The maxim commended to us by him who must ever remain the greatest citizen of the Republic—“Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty,” embodies a truth which goes to the very core of philosophy, which must everywhere and at all times be true. Ever and ever we sail an unknown sea. Old shapes of menace fade but to give place to others. Ever new rocks lurk ; ever in new guise the syrens sing !

As through the million-voiced plaudits of to-day we hear again the words that when first spoken were ominous of cord and gibbet, and amid a nation's rejoicing our pulses quicken as imagination pictures the bridge of Lexington, the slender earthworks of Bunker Hill, the charge of tattered Continentals, or the swift night-ride of Marion's men, let us not think that our own times are commonplace, and make no call for the patriotism that, as it wells up in our hearts, we feel would have been strong to dare and do had we lived then.

How momentous our own times may be the future alone can tell. We are yet laying the foundations of empire, while stronger run the currents of change and mightier are the forces that marshal and meet.

Let us turn to the past, not in the belief that the great men of the past conquered for us a heritage that we have but to enjoy, but that we may catch their heroic spirit to guide and nerve us in the exigencies of the present; that we may pass it on to our children, to carry them through the dangers of the future.

Now, as a hundred years ago, the Republic has need of that spirit—of the noble sensitiveness that is jealous for Freedom; of the generous indignation that weighs our consideration of expediency against the sacrifice of one iota of popular right; of the quick sympathy that made an attack on the liberties of one colony felt in all; of the patient patriotism that worked and waited, never flagging, never tiring,

seeking not recognition nor applause, looking only to the ultimate end and to the common good; of the devotion to a high ideal which led men to risk for it all things sweet and all things dear !

We shall best honor the men of the Revolution by invoking the spirit that animated them; we shall best perpetuate their memories by looking in the face whatever threatens the perpetuity of their work. Whether a century hence they shall be regarded as visionaries or as men who gave a new life to mankind, depends upon us.

For let us not disguise it—republican government is yet but an experiment. That it has worked well so far, determines nothing. That Republican institutions would work well under the social conditions of the youth of the Republic—cheap land, high wages and little distinction between rich and poor—there was never any doubt, for they were working well before. Our Revolution was not a revolution in the full sense of the term, as was that great outburst of the spirit of freedom that followed it in France. The colonies but separated from Great Britain, and became an independent nation without essential change in the institutions under which they had grown up. The doubt about republican institutions is as to whether they will work when population becomes dense, wages low, and a great gulf separates rich and poor.

Can we speak of it as a doubt? Nothing in political philosophy can be clearer than that under such conditions republican government must break down.

This is not to say that these forms must be abandoned. We might and probably would go on holding our elections for years and years after our government had become essentially despotic. It was centuries after Cæsar, ere the absolute master of the Roman world pretended to rule other than by authority of a Senate that trembled before him. It was not till the thirteenth century that English kings dropped the formal claim of what was once the essence of their title—the choice of the people; and to this day the coronation ceremonies of European monarchs retain traces of the free election of their leader by equal warriors.

But forms are nothing when substance has gone. And our forms are those from which the substance may most easily go. Extremes meet, and a republican government, based on universal suffrage and theoretical equality, is of all governments that which may most easily become a despotism of

the worst kind. For there, despotism advances in the name of the people. The single source of power once secured, everything is secured. There is no unfranchised class to whom appeal may be made; no privileged orders, who in defending their own rights may defend those of all. No bulwark remains to stay the flood, no eminence to rise above it.

And where there is universal suffrage, just as the disparity of condition increases, so does it become easy to seize the source of power, for the greater is the proportion of power in the hands of those who feel no direct interest in the conduct of the government, nay, who, made bitter by hardships, may even look upon profligate government with the sort of satisfaction we may imagine the proletarians and slaves of Rome to have felt as they saw a Caligula or Nero raging among the rich patricians.

Given a community with Republican institutions, in which one class is too rich to be shorn of their luxuries, no matter how public affairs are administered, and another so poor that any little share of the public plunder, even though it be but a few dollars on election day, will seem more than any abstract consideration, and power must pass into the hands of jobbers who will sell it, as the prætorian legions sold the Roman purple, while the people will be forced to reimburse the purchase money with costs and profits. If to the pecuniary temptation involved in the ordinary conduct of government are added those that come from the granting of subsidies, the disposition of public lands and the regulation of prices by means of a protective tariff, the process will be the swifter.

Even the accidents of hereditary succession or of selection by lot (the plan of some of the ancient republics) may sometimes place the wise and just in power, but in a corrupt republic the tendency is always to give power to the worst. Honesty and patriotism are weighted and unscrupulousness commands success. The best gravitate to the bottom; the worst float to the top; and the vile can only be ousted by the viler. [And as a corrupt government always tends to make the rich richer and the poor poorer, the fundamental cause of corruption is steadily aggravated, while as national character must gradually assimilate to the qualities that command power and consequently respect, that demoralization of opinion goes on which in the long panorama of history we may see over and over again, transmuting races of freemen into races of slaves.

As in England, in the last century, where Parliament was but a close corporation of the aristocracy, a corrupt oligarchy where it is clearly fenced off from the masses, may

exist without much effect on national character; because, in that case, power is associated in the popular mind with other things than corruption; but where there are no hereditary distinctions, and men are habitually seen to raise themselves by corrupt qualities from the lowest places to wealth and power, tolerance of these qualities finally becomes admiration. A corrupt democratic government must finally corrupt the people, and when a people become corrupt, there is no resurrection. The life has gone, only the carcass remains; and it is left but for the plowshares of fate to bury it out of sight.

Secure in her strength and position from external dangers, with the cause gone that threatened her unity, the Republic begins to count the years of her second century with a future, to all outward seeming, secure. But may we not see already closing round her the insidious perils from which, since her birth, destruction has been predicted? Clearly, to him who will look, are we passing from the conditions under which republican government is easy, into those under which it becomes endangered, if not dangerous. While the possessor of a single million is ceasing to be noticeable in the throng of millionaires, and larger private fortunes are mounting towards hundreds of millions, we are all over the country becoming familiar with widespread poverty in its hardest aspects—not the poverty that nourishes the rugged virtues, but poverty of the kind that dispirits and embrates.

And as we see the gulf widening between rich and poor, may we not as plainly see the symptoms of political deterioration that in a republican government must always accompany it? Social distinctions are sharpest in our great cities, and in our great cities is not republican government becoming a reproach? May we not see in these cities that the worst social influences are become the most potent political factors; that corrupt rings notoriously rule; that offices are virtually purchased—and, most ominous of all, may we not plainly see the growth of a sentiment that looks on all this as natural, if not perfectly legitimate; that either doubts the existence of an honest man in public place, or thinks of him as a fool too weak to seize his opportunity? Has not the primary system, which is simply republicanism applied to party management, already broken down in our great cities, and are not parties in their despair already calling for what in general government would be oligarchies and dictatorships?

We talk about the problem of municipal government ! It is not the problem of municipal government that we have to solve, but the problem of republican government. These great cities are but the type of our development. They are growing not merely with the growth of the country, but faster than the growth of the country. There are children here to-day who in all human probability will see San Francisco a city as large as London, and will count through the country New Yorks by the score!

Fellow-citizens, the wind does not blow north or south because the weathercocks turn that way. The complaints of political demoralization that come from every quarter are not because bad men have been elected to office or corrupt men have taken to engineering parties. If bad men are elected to office, if corrupt men rule parties, is it not because the conditions are such as to give them the advantage over good and pure men? Fellow-citizens, it is not the glamour of success that makes the men whose work we celebrate to-day loom up through the mists of a century like giants. They were giants—some of them so great, that with all our eulogies we do not yet appreciate them, and their full fame must wait for yet another century. But the reason why such intellectual greatness gathered around the cradle of the Republic and guided her early steps, was not that men were greater in that day, but that the people chose their best. You will hardly find a man of that time, of high character and talent, who was not in some way in the public service. This certainly cannot be said now. And it is because power is concentrating, as it must concentrate as our institutions deteriorate. If one of those men were to come back to-day and were spoken of for high position—say for the United States Senate—instead of Jefferson's, three questions the knowing ones would ask : "Has he money to make the fight?" "Are the corporations for him?" "Can he put up the primaries?" No less a man than Benjamin Franklin—a man whose fame as a statesman and philosopher is yet growing—a man whom the French Academy, the most splendid intellectual assemblage in Europe, applauded as the modern Solon—represented the city of Philadelphia in the provincial Assembly for ten years, until, as their best man, he was sent to defend the colony in London. Are there not to-day cities in the land which even a Benjamin Franklin could not represent in a State Assembly unless he put around his neck the collar of a corporation or took his orders from a local ring?

You will think of many things in this connection to which it is not necessary for me to allude. We all see them.

Though we may not speak it openly, the general faith in republican institutions is narrowing and weakening—it is no longer that defiant, jubilant, boastful belief in republicanism as the source of all national blessings and the cure for all human woes that it once was. We begin to realize that corruption may cost as much as a royal family, and that the vaunted ballot, under certain conditions, may bring forth ruling classes of the worst kind, while we already see developing around us social evils that we once associated only with effete monarchies. Can we talk so proudly of welcoming the oppressed of all nations when thousands vainly seek for work at the lowest wages? Can we expect him, who must sup on charity, to rejoice that he cannot be taxed without being represented; or congratulate him who seeks shelter in a station-house that, as a citizen of the Republic, he is the peer of the monarchs of earth?

Is there any tendency to improvement?

Fellow-citizens, we have hitherto had an advantage over older nations which we can hardly over-estimate. It has been our public domain, our back ground of unfenced land, that made our social conditions better than those of Europe; that relieved the labor market and maintained wages; that kept open a door of escape from the increasing pressure in older sections, and acting and re-acting in many ways on our national character, gave it freedom and independence, elasticity and hope.

But with a folly for which coming generations may curse us, we have wasted it away. Worse than the Norman conqueror, we have repeated *the* sin of the sin-swollen Henry VIII; and already we hear in the “tramp” of the sturdy vagrant of the Sixteenth Century, the predecessor of the English pauper of this. We have done to the future the unutterable wrong that English rule and English law did to Ireland, and already we begin to hear of rack-rents and evictions. We have repeated the crime that filled Italy with a servile population in place of the hardy farmers who had carried her eagles to victory after victory—the crime that ate out the heart of the Mistress of the World, and buried the glories of ancient civilization in the darkness of medieval night. Instead of guarding the public domain as the most precious of our heritages; instead of preserving it for our poorer classes of to-day and for the uncounted millions who must follow us, we have made it the reward of corruption, greed, fraud and perjury. Go out in this fair land to-day and you may see great estates tilled by Chinamen, while citizens

of the Republic carry their blankets through dusty roads begging for work; you may ride for miles and miles through fertile land and see no sign of human life save the ghastly chimney of an evicted settler or the miserable shanty of a poverty-stricken renter. Cross the bay, and you will see the loveliest piece of mountain scenery around this great city, though destitute of habitation, walled in with a high board fence, that none but the owner of 20,000 acres of land may look upon its beauties. Pass over these broad acres which lie as they lay ere man was born on this earth, and under penalty of fine and imprisonment you must confine yourself to the road, purchased of him with poll taxes of four dollars a head wrung from men packing their blankets in search of work at a dollar a day.

Fellow-citizens, the public domain fit for homes is almost gone, and at the rate we are parting with the rest, it is certain that by the time children now in our public schools come of age, the pre-emption law and the homestead law will remain on our statute books only to remind them of their squandered birthright. Then the influences that are at work to concentrate wealth in the hands of the few, and make dependence the lot of the many, will have free play.

How potent are these influences ! Though in form everything seems tending to Republican equality, a new power has entered the world, that under present social adjustments is working with irresistible force to subject the many to the few. The tendency of all modern machinery is to give capital an overpowering advantage and make labor helpless. Our boys cannot learn trades, because there are few to learn. The journeyman who, with his kit of tools, could make a living anywhere, is being replaced by the operative who performs but one part of a process, and must work with tools he can never hope to own, and who consequently must take but a bare living, while all the enormous increase of wealth which results from the economy of production must go to increase great fortunes. The undercurrents of the times seem to sweep us back again to the old conditions from which we dreamed we had escaped. The development of the artisan and commercial classes gradually broke down feudalism after it had become so complete that men thought of heaven as organized on a feudal basis, and ranked the first and second persons of the Trinity as Suzerain and Tenant-in-Chief. But now the development of manufacture and exchange has reached a point which threatens to compel every worker to seek a master, as the insecurity which followed the final break up of the Roman empire compelled every freeman to seek a lord. Nothing

seems exempt from this tendency. Even errands are run by a corporation, and one company carries carpet-sacks, while another drives the hack. It is the old guilds of the middle ages over again, only that instead of all being equal, one is master and the others serve. And where one is master and the others serve, the one will control the others, even in such matters as votes.

In our constitution is a clause prohibiting the granting of titles of nobility. In the light of the present it seems a good deal like the device of the man who, leaving a big hole for the cat, sought to keep the kitten out by blocking up the little hole. Could titles add anything to the power of the aristocracy that is here growing up? Six hundred liveried retainers followed the great Earl of Warwick to Parliament; but in this young State there is already a simple citizen who could discharge any one of thousands of men from their employment, who controls 2,200 miles of railroad and telegraph, and millions of acres of land; and has the power of levying toll on traffic and travel over an area twice that of the original thirteen States. Warwick was a king-maker. Would it add to the real power of our simple citizen were we to dub him an earl?

Look at the social conditions which are growing up here in California. Land monopolized; water monopolized; a race of cheap workers crowding in, whose effect upon our own laboring classes is precisely that of slavery; all the avenues of trade and travel under one control, all wealth and power tending more and more to concentrate in a few hands. What sort of a republic will this be in a few years longer if these things go on? The idea would be ridiculous, were it not too sad.

Fellow-citizens, I am talking of things not men. Most irrational would be any enmity towards individuals. How few are there of us who under similiar circumstances would not do just what those we speak of as monopolists have done. To put a saddle on our back is to invite the booted and spurred to ride. It is not men who are to blame but the system. And who is to blame for the system, but the whole people? If the lion will suffer his teeth to be pulled and his claws to be pared, he must expect every cur to tease him.

But, fellow citizens, while it is true that a republican government worth the name cannot exist under the social conditions into which we are passing, it is also true that under a really republican government such conditions could not be.

I do not mean to say we have not had enough government ; I mean to say that we have had too much. It is a truth that cannot be too clearly kept in mind that the best government is that which governs least, and that the more a republican government undertakes to do, the less republican it becomes. Unhealthy social conditions are but the result of interferences with natural rights.

There is nothing in the condition of things (it were a libel on the Creator to say so) which condemns one class to toil and want while another live in wasteful luxury. There is enough and to spare for us all. But if one is permitted to ignore the rights of others by taking more than his share, the others must get less ; a difference is created which constantly tends to become greater, and a greedy scramble ensues in which more is wasted than is used.

If you will trace out the laws of the production of wealth and see how enormous are the forces now wasted, if you will follow the laws of its distribution, and see how, by human laws, one set of men are enabled to appropriate a greater or less part of the earnings of the others; if you will think how this robbery of labor degrades the laborer and makes him unable to drive a fair bargain, and how it diminishes production, you will begin to see that there is no necessity for poverty, and that the growing disparity of social conditions proceeds from laws which deny the equal rights of men.

Fellow-citizens, we have just listened again to the Declaration, not merely of national independence, but of the rights of man.

Great was Magna Charta—a beacon of light through centuries of darkness, a bulwark of the oppressed through ages of wrong, a firm rock for Liberty's feet, as she still strove onward!

But all charters and bills of right, all muniments and titles of Liberty, are included in that simple statement of self-evident truth that is the heart and soul of the Declaration: "That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among them are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

In these simple words breathes not only the spirit of Magna Charta, but the spirit which seeks its inspiration in the eternal facts of nature—through them speak not only Stephen Langton and John Hampton, but Watt Tyler and the Mad Priest of Kent.

The assertion of the equal rights of all men to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is the assertion of the right of each to the fullest, freest exercise of all his faculties, limited only by the equal right of every other. It includes freedom of person and security of earnings, freedom of trade and capital, freedom of conscience and speech and the press. It is the declaration of the same equal rights of all human beings to the enjoyment of the bounty of the Creator—to light and to air, to water and to land. It asserts these rights as inalienable—as the direct grant of the Creator to each human being, of which he can be rightfully deprived neither by kings nor Congresses, neither by parchments nor prescriptions—neither by the compacts of past generations nor by majority votes.

This simple yet all-embracing statement bears the stamp royal of primary truth—it includes all partial truths and coordinates with all other truths. This perfect liberty, which, by giving each his rights, secures the rights of all—is order, for violence is the infringement of right; it is justice, for injustice is the denial of right; it is equality, for one cannot have more than his right, without another having less. It is reverence towards God, for irreverence is the denial of His order; it is love towards man, for it accords to others all that we ask for ourselves. It is the message that the angels sang over Bethlehem in Judea—it is the political expression of the Golden Rule!

Like all men who build on truth, the men of the Revolution builded better than they knew. The Declaration of Independence was ahead of their time; it is in advance of our time; it means more than perhaps even he saw whose pen traced it—man of the future that he was and still is! But it has in it the generative power of truth; it has grown and still must grow.

They tore from the draft of the Declaration the page in which Jefferson branded the execrable crime of slavery. But in vain! In those all-embracing words that page was still there, and though it has taken a century, they are, in this respect vindicated at last, and human flesh and blood can no longer be bought and sold.

It is for us to vindicate them further. Slavery is not dead, though its grossest form be gone. What is the difference, whether my body is legally held by another, or whether he legally holds that by which alone I can live. Hunger is as cruel as the lash. The essence of slavery consists in taking

from a man all the fruits of his labor except a bare living, and of how many thousands miscalled free is this the lot? Where wealth most abounds there are classes with whom the average plantation negro would have lost in comfort by exchanging. English villeins in the Fourteenth Century were better off than English agricultural laborers of the Nineteenth. There is slavery and slavery! "The widow," says Carlyle, "is gathering nettles for her children's dinner; a perfumed seigneur, delicately lounging in the *Ceil de Bœuf*, has an alchemy whereby he will extract from her the third nettle, and call it rent!"

Fellow-citizens, let us not be deluded by names. What is the use of a republic if labor must stand with its hat off begging for leave to work, if "tramps" must throng the highways and children grow up in squalid tenement houses? Political institutions are but means to an end--the freedom and happiness of the individual; and just so far as they fail in that, call them what you will, they are condemned.

Our conditions are changing. The laws which impel nations to seek a larger measure of liberty, or else take from them what they have, are working silently but with irresistible force. If we would perpetuate the Republic, we must come up to the spirit of the Declaration, and fully recognize the equal rights of all men. We must free labor from its burdens and trade from its fetters; we must cease to make government an excuse for enriching the few at the expense of the many, and confine it to necessary functions. We must cease to permit the monopolization of land and water by non-users, and apply the just rule, "No seat reserved unless occupied." We must cease the cruel wrong which, by first denying their natural rights, reduces laborers to the wages of competition, and then, under pretence of asserting the rights of another race, compels them to a competition that will not merely force them to a standard of comfort unworthy the citizen of a free republic, but ultimately deprive them of their equal right to live.

Here is the test: whatever conduces to their equal and inalienable rights to men is good--let us preserve it. Whatever denies or interferes with those equal rights is bad--let us sweep it away. If we thus make our institutions consistent with their theory, all difficulties must vanish. We will not merely have a republic, but social conditions consistent with a republic. If we will not do this, we surrender the Republic, either to be torn by the volcanic forces that already shake the ground beneath the standing armies of Europe, or to rot by slow degrees, and in its turn undergo the fate of all its predecessors.

Liberty is not a new invention that, once secured, can never be lost. Freedom is the natural state of man. "Who is your lord?" shouted the envoys of Charles the Simple to the Northmen who had penetrated into the heart of France. "We have no lord; we are all free men!" was their answer; and so in their time of vigor would have answered every people that ever made a figure in the world. But at some point in the development of every people, freedom has been lost, because as fresh gains were made, or new forces developed, they were turned to the advantage of a few.

Wealth in itself is a good, not an evil; but wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, corrupts on one side, and degrades on the other. No chain is stronger than its weakest link, and the ultimate condition of any people must be the condition of its lowest class. If the low are not brought up, the high must be brought down. In the long run, no nation can be freer than its most oppressed, richer than its poorest, wiser than its most ignorant. This is the fiat of the eternal justice that rules the world. It stands forth on every page of history. It is what the Sphinx says to us as she sitteth in desert sand, while the winged bulls of Nineveh bear her witness! It is written in the undecipherable hieroglyphics of Yucatan; in the brick mounds of Babylon; in the prostrate columns of Persiopolis; in the salt-sown plain of Carthage. It speaks to us from the shattered relics of Grecian art; from the mighty ruins of the Coliseum! Down through the centuries comes a warning voice from the great Republic of the ancient world to the great Republic of the new. In three Latin words, Pliny sums up the genesis of the causes that ate out the heart of the mightiest power that the world ever saw, and overwhelmed a widespread civilization: "Great estates ruined Italy!"

Let us heed the warning by laying the foundations of the Republic upon the work of the equal, inalienable rights of all. So shall dangers disappear, and forces that now threaten turn to work our bidding; so shall wealth increase, and knowledge grow, and vice, and crime and misery vanish away.

They who look upon Liberty as having accomplished her mission, when she has abolished hereditary privileges and given men the ballot, who think of her as having no further relations to the every-day affairs of life, have not seen her real grandeur—to them the poets who have sung of her must seem rhapsodists, and her martyrs fools! As the sun is the lord of life, as well as of light; as his beams not merely

pierce the clouds, but support all growth, supply all motion, and call forth from what would otherwise be a cold and inert mass, all the infinite diversities of being and beauty, so is liberty to mankind. It is not for an abstraction that men have toiled and died ; that in every age the witnesses of liberty have stood forth, and the martyrs of liberty have suffered. It was for more than this that matrons handed the Queen Anne musket from its rest, and that maids bid their lovers go to death !

We speak of liberty as one thing, and of virtue, wealth, knowledge, invention, national strength and national independence as other things. But, of all these, Liberty is the source, the mother, the necessary condition. She is to virtue what light is to color, to wealth what sunshine is to grain ; to knowledge what eyes are to the sight. She is the genius of invention, the brawn of national strength, the spirit of national independence ! Where Liberty rises, there virtue grows, wealth increases, knowledge expands, invention multiplies human powers, and in strength and spirit the freer nation rises among her neighbors as Saul amid his brethren—taller and fairer. Where Liberty sinks, there virtue fades, wealth diminishes, knowledge is forgotten, invention ceases, and empires once mighty in arms and arts become a helpless prey to freer barbarians !

Only in broken gleams and partial light has the sun of Liberty yet beamed among men, yet all progress hath she called forth.

Liberty came to a race of slaves crouching under Egyptian whips, and led them forth from the House of Bondage. She hardened them in the desert and made of them a race of conquerors. The free spirit of the Mosaic law took their thinkers up to heights where they beheld the unity of God, and inspired their poets with strains that yet phrase the highest exaltations of thought. Liberty dawned on the Phœnician coast, and ships passed the Pillars of Hercules to plow the unknown sea. She broke in partial light on Greece, and marble grew to shapes of ideal beauty, words became the instruments of subtlest thought, and against the scanty militia of free cities the countless hosts of the Great King broke like surges against a rock. She cast her beams on the four-acre farms of Italian husbandmen, and born of her strength a power came forth that conquered the world ! She glinted from shields of German warriors, and Augustus wept his legions. Out of the night that followed her eclipse, her slanting rays fell again on free cities, and a lost learning revived, modern civilization began, a new world was unveiled ; and as Liberty grew so grew art, wealth, power, knowledge

and refinement. In the history of every nation we may find the same truth. It was the strength born of Magna Charta that won Crecy and Agincourt. It was the revival of Liberty from the despotism of the Tudors that glorified the Elizabethan age. It was the spirit that brought a crowned tyrant to the block that planted here the seed of a mighty tree. It was the energy of ancient freedom that, at the moment it had gained unity, made Spain the mightiest power of the world, only to fall to the lowest depth of weakness when tyranny succeeded liberty. See, in France, all intellectual vigor dying under the tyranny of the Seventeenth Century to revive in splendor as Liberty awoke in the Eighteenth, and on the enfranchisement of the French peasants in the Great Revolution, basing the wonderful strength that has in our time laughed at disaster.

What liberty shall do for the nation that fully accepts and loyally cherishes her, the wondrous inventions, which are the marked feature of this century, give us but a hint. Just as the condition of the working classes is improved, do we gain in productive power. Wherever labor is best paid and has most leisure, comfort, and refinement, there invention is most active and most generally utilized. Short-sighted are they who think the reduction of working hours would reduce the production of wealth. Human muscles are one of the tiniest of forces; but for the human mind the resistless powers of nature work. To enfranchise labor, to give it leisure and comfort and independence, is to substitute in production mind for muscle. When this is fully done, the power that we now exert over matter will be as nothing to that we shall have.

It has been said that from the very increase of our numbers, the American Union must in time necessarily break up. I do not believe it. Even now, while the memories of a civil war are fresh, I do not think any part of our people regret that this continent is not bisected by an imaginary line, separating two jealous nations, two great standing armies. If we respect the equal rights of all, if we reduce the operation of our National Government to the purposes for which it is alone fitted, the preservation of the common peace, the maintenance of the common security and the promotion of the common convenience, there can be no sectional interest adverse to unity, and the blessings of the bond that makes us a nation must become more apparent as years roll on.

far from this Union necessarily falling to pieces from piercown weight, it may, if we but hold fast to justice, not and rely embrace a continent, but prove in the future capable in a wider extension than we have yet dreamed.

The crazy king, the brutal ministers, the rotten Parliament, the combination of tyranny, folly, corruption and arrogance that sundered the Anglo-Saxon race, is gone, but stronger and stronger grow the influence of the deathless minds that make our common language classic. The republic of Anglo-Saxon literature extends wherever the tongue of Shakespeare is spoken. The great actors who from time to time walk this stage, find their audiences over half the globe; it is to one people that our poets sing; it is one mind that responds to the thought of our thinkers. The old bitternesses are passing away. With us the hatreds, born of two wars, are beginning to soften and die out, while Englishmen, who this year honor us in honoring the citizen whom we have twice deemed worthy of our foremost place, are beginning to look upon our Revolution as the vindication of their own liberties.

A hundred years have passed since the fast friend of American liberty—the great Earl Chatham—rose to make his last appeal for the preservation, on the basis of justice, of that English-speaking empire, in which he saw the grandest possibility of the future. Is it too soon to hope that the future may hold the realization of his vision in a nobler form than even he imagined, and that it may be the mission of this republic to unite all the nations of English speech, whether they grow beneath the Northern Star or Southern Cross, in a league which, by insuring justice, promoting peace, and liberating commerce, will be the forerunner of a world-wide federation that will make war the possibility of a past age, and turn to works of usefulness the enormous forces now dedicated to destruction.

And she to whom on this day our hearts turn, our ancient ally, our generous friend—thank God we can say, our sister Republic of France! It was not alone the cold calculations of kingcraft that when our need was direst, helped us with money and supplies, with armies and fleets. The grand idea of the equal rights of man was stirring in France, her pulses were throbbing with the new life that was soon to shake the thrones of Europe as with an earthquake, and French sympathy went out where liberty made her stand. “They are a generous people,” wrote Franklin, “they do not like to hear

of advantages in return for their aid. They desire the of helping us." France has that glory, and more. Let column Vendome fall, and the memory of the butcher-mankind fade away; the great things that France has done for freedom will make her honored of the nations, while with increasing and increasing meaning, rings through the ages the cry with which she turned to the thunder-burst of Valmy: "Live the people!"

Beset by difficulties from which we are happily exempt—on the one side those who dream of bringing back the middle ages, on the other the red specter; compelled, or in fancy compelled, by the legacy of old hates to maintain that nightmare of prosperity and deadly foe of freedom, a large standing army—France has yet steadily made progress. Italy is one; the great Germanic race at last have unity; as out of a trance, life stirs in Spain; Russia moves as she marches. May it not be France's to again show Europe the way?

Fellow-citizens: If I have sought rather to appeal to thought than to flatter vanity, it is not that I do not see the greatness and feel the love of my country. Drawing my first breath almost within the shadow of Independence Hall, the cherished traditions of the Republic entwine themselves with my earliest recollections, and her flag symbolizes to me all that I hold dear on earth. But for the very love I bear her, for the very memories I cherish, I would not dare come before you on this day and ignore the dangers I see in her path.

If I have not dwelt on her material greatness or pictured her future growth, it is because there rises before me a higher ideal of what this Republic may be than can be expressed in material symbols—an ideal so glorious that, beside it, all that we now pride ourselves on seems mean and pitiful. That ideal is not satisfied with a republic where, with all the enormous gains in productive power, labor is ground down to a bare living and must think the chance to work a favor; it is not satisfied with a republic where prisons are crowded and almshouses are built and families are housed in tiers. It is not satisfied with a republic where one tenant for a day can warn his co-tenants off of more of the surface of this rolling sphere than he is using or can use, or compel them to pay him for the bounty of their common Creator; it is not satisfied with a republic where the fear of poverty on the one hand and the sight of great wealth on the other makes the lives of so many such



pier,
 and, unstraining, keeps eyes to the ground that might be
 in'd to the stars, and substitutes the worship of the
 s den Calf for that of the Living God!
 It hopes for a republic where all shall have plenty, where
 each may sit under his vine and fig tree, with none to vex
 him or make him afraid; where with want shall gradually
 disappear vice and crime; where men shall cease to spend
 their lives in a struggle to live, or in heaping up things they
 cannot take away; where talent shall be greater than wealth
 and character greater than talent, and where each may find
 free scope to develop body, mind and soul.

Is this the dream of dreamers? One brought to the world the message that it might be reality. But they crucified him between two thieves.

Not till it accepts that message can the world have peace. Look over the history of the past. What is it but a record of the woes inflicted by man on man, of wrong producing wrong, and crime fresh crime? It must be so till justice is acknowledged and liberty is law.

Some things have we done, but not all. In the words with which an eminent Frenchman closes the history of that great revolution that followed ours: "Liberty is not yet here; but she will come!"

Fellow-citizens, let us follow the star that rose above the cradle of the Republic; let us try our laws by the test of the Declaration. Let us show to the nations our faith in Liberty, nor fear she will lead us astray.

Who is Liberty that we should doubt her; that we should set bounds to her, and say, "Thus far shall thou come and no further!" Is she not peace? is she not prosperity? is she not progress? nay, is she not the goal towards which all progress strives?

Not here; but yet she cometh! Saints have seen her in their visions; seers have seen her in their trance. To heroes has she spoken, and their hearts were strong; to martyrs and the flames were cool!

She is not here, but yet she cometh. Lo! her feet are on the mountains—the call of her clarions ring on every breeze; the banners of her dawning fret the sky! Who will hear her as she calleth; who will bid her come and welcome? Who will turn to her? who will speak for her? who will stand for her while she yet hath need?



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